

Desk Statement
Elm Street Lead Site
February 20, 2019

EPA will be conducting a Removal Site Investigation to address contamination related to the application or illegal dumping of slag in the English Avenue community.

EPA selected a two-block area surrounding the slag piles, encompassing sixty properties, for further investigation. EPA is in the process of obtaining access agreements with the property owners and generating a sampling plan. EPA will collect and analyze soil samples from the properties and inform the residents/owners of the results. Although no final plans are yet in place, it is anticipated that soils above the RML will be excavated to protect the health of the residents. If the sampling indicates additional properties are impacted, the study area will be expanded as necessary until EPA feels the contamination is completely delineated. Currently, no responsible parties have been identified, but EPA investigators continue to research historical information to determine the source of the slag.

Background

In 2018, while performing research for a Doctoral thesis, a student from Emory University collected soil samples from gardens throughout Metro Atlanta, including urban gardens in Atlanta's west-side neighborhoods. The student used an X-ray fluoroscope (XRF) to screen the soil for heavy metal contamination. Results at several parcels on the west side were above the EPA Removal Management Level (RML)



for lead in residential soil of 400 parts per million (ppm). Additional investigation led to the discovery of industrial smelting waste (slag) on at least 2 lots around Elm Street in English Avenue. This slag is a confirmed source of at least some of the heavy metal contamination. The Emory University student sent a report to an EPA Region 4 employee that is also an instructor at Emory. EPA consulted with Georgia's Environmental Protection Division (EPD) and in December of 2018, EPD requested EPA conduct a Removal Site Investigation.